



## **Information Technologies – Documents on the Web – January 2006**

### **GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS:**

#### **INTERNET ACCESS TAX MORATORIUM: REVENUE IMPACTS WILL VARY BY STATE**

Government Accountability Office (GAO). January 23, 2006. 55 pages.

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d06273.pdf>

“According to one report, at the end of 2004, some 70 million U.S. adults logged on to access the Internet during a typical day. As public use of the Internet grew from the mid-1990s onward, Internet access became a potential target for state and local taxation. In 1998, Congress imposed a moratorium temporarily preventing state and local governments from imposing new taxes on Internet access. Existing state and local taxes were grandfathered. In amending the moratorium in 2004, Congress required GAO to study its impact on state and local government revenues. This report’s objectives are to determine the scope of the moratorium and its impact, if any, on state and local revenues.”

#### **CONSTITUTIONALITY OF REQUIRING SEXUALLY EXPLICIT MATERIAL ON THE INTERNET TO BE UNDER A SEPARATE DOMAIN NAME**

Henry Cohen. Congressional Research Service (CRS). January 18, 2006. 12 pages.

[http://www.ipmall.info/hosted\\_resources/crs/RL33224\\_060118.pdf](http://www.ipmall.info/hosted_resources/crs/RL33224_060118.pdf)

“It has been proposed that there be a domain on the Internet exclusively for websites that contain sexually explicit material; it might be labeled “.xxx” to complement the current “.com,” “.org,” and others. Some propose making use of a “.xxx” domain voluntary, but others propose that Congress make it mandatory. The latter proposal raises the question whether a mandatory separate domain would violate the First Amendment, and this report focuses on that question.”

#### **TELECOMMUNICATIONS: CHALLENGES TO ASSESSING AND IMPROVING TELECOMMUNICATIONS FOR NATIVE AMERICANS ON TRIBAL LANDS**

Government Accountability Office (GAO). January 11, 2006. 88 pages.

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d06189.pdf>

“An important goal of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, is to ensure access to telecommunications services for all Americans. The Federal Communications Commission has made efforts to improve the historically low subscribership rates of Native Americans on tribal lands. In addition, Congress is considering legislation to establish a grant program to help tribes improve telecommunications services on their lands. This report discusses 1) the status of telecommunications subscribership for Native Americans living on tribal lands; 2) federal programs available for improving telecommunications on these lands; 3) barriers to improvements; and 4) how some tribes are addressing these barriers.”

### **CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS:**

## VIDEO CONTENT

U.S. Senate. Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. Full Committee. January 31, 2006.

<http://commerce.senate.gov/hearings/witnesslist.cfm?id=1701>

“Retransmission consent allows broadcasters to negotiate compensation for their popular over-the-air content. The big four broadcasters – ABC, NBC, CBS and FOX – have used their retransmission consent to negotiate carriage for both their over-the-air programming and programming of cable channels in which they have invested. Some small cable companies contend that the broadcasters use retransmission consent to go further than Congress intended. And, some of the small cable companies want to offer family tiers, but they’ve said that they cannot because the contracts the programmers offer would require them to air content not appropriate for children to the majority of their viewers. Other rural providers have told us that the price they are asked to pay programmers for content is substantially higher than their urban counterparts.”

## BROADCAST AND AUDIO FLAG

U.S. Senate. Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. Full Committee. January 24, 2006.

<http://commerce.senate.gov/hearings/witnesslist.cfm?id=1704>

“Some time ago a group of us joined together and asked the FCC to deal with the issues before us now. And, this broadcast flag was developed to protect the over-the-air digital television programming from piracy. The FCC adopted that broadcast flag rule, which the consumer electronics industry had begun to implement by developing devices that complied with its requirements. But, the Court has struck down that regulation and held that Congress had not given the Commission authority to promulgate the rule and that’s what brings us here today. We’re trying to address the question of whether Congress should provide the FCC the authority to put the rule back in place. Groups like the American Library Association are concerned that if Congress give the FCC the authority to enforce the broadcast flag, the rights of consumers and educators to copy, watch, and share programs the way VCR recordings are shared will be threatened. Likewise some consumers want to make sure that they can continue to exercise their fair-use rights to record video programming for personal use.”

## PROTECTING CHILDREN ON THE INTERNET

U.S. Senate. Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. Full Committee. January 19, 2006.

<http://commerce.senate.gov/hearings/witnesslist.cfm?id=1699>

“We are finding that the Internet is increasingly a place where Americans turn to get information, do research, and exchange ideas. And increasingly our children are looking to the Internet for information. Given the increasingly important role of the Internet in education and commerce, it differs from other media like TV and cable in that parents cannot just foreclose the Internet from their children altogether and expect them to do their homework and be prepared to succeed in life. But even more so than TV and cable, the Internet contains material inappropriate for children. As the Internet continues to evolve and new offerings like peer-to-peer evolve, we must determine what we can do to protect children as they pursue the use of computers and the Internet for their education.”

## RESEARCH CENTER REPORTS:

### THE STRENGTH OF INTERNET TIES

Report. The Pew Internet & American Life Project. January 25, 2006. 65 pages.

[http://www.pewInternet.org/pdfs/PIP\\_Internet\\_ties.pdf](http://www.pewInternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Internet_ties.pdf)

“The report finds that the Internet and email expand and strengthen the social ties that people maintain in the offline world. People not only socialize online, but they also incorporate the Internet into their quest for information and advice as they seek help and make decisions. Disputing concerns that heavy use of the Internet might diminish people's social relations, the report finds that the Internet fits seamlessly with Americans' in-person and phone encounters. With the help of the Internet, people are able to maintain active contact with sizable social networks, even though many of the people in those networks do not live close to them. The report highlights how email supplements, rather than replaces, the communication people have with others in their network.”

#### GENERATIONS ONLINE

Data Memo. The Pew Internet & American Life Project. January 22, 2006. 5 pages.

[http://www.pewInternet.org/pdfs/PIP\\_Generations\\_Memo.pdf](http://www.pewInternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Generations_Memo.pdf)

“Internet users ages 12 to 28 years old have embraced the online applications that enable communicative, creative, and social uses. Older users are more likely to engage in online activities that require some capital: travel reservations and online banking. Tables comparing how different generations' use the Internet are included in this data memo.”

#### NEW INEQUALITY FRONTIER: BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS

Caroline J. Tolbert and Karen Mossberger. Economic Policy Institute (EPI). Working Paper #275. January 2006. 49 pages.

<http://www.epinet.org/workingpapers/wp275.pdf>

“The potential economic impact of broadband is substantial, and broadband's faster and more convenient access to the Internet creates social benefits including high-speed interactive uses in the K-12 classroom, distance learning, medicine, telecommuting, and adaptive technology for individuals with disabilities. This report finds that broadband use may encourage skill development and the migration of daily tasks online. Although broadband access has now become more widespread, there are marked disparities in rural areas, where the need for fast connections that can compensate for geographic isolation is perhaps the greatest. Other gaps in broadband access and use are clearly related to social factors (income, education, age, race/ethnicity and gender) rather than infrastructure, as they largely mirror the dimensions of inequalities in computer and Internet access more generally.”

#### THINK TANK OPINION AND ANALYSIS:

#### INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND INNOVATION IN THE DIGITAL WORLD

Raymond Gifford. The Progress & Freedom Foundation. Remarks given at the IP Summit in Prague. January 17, 2006. 2 pages.

[http://www.pff.org/issues-pubs/testimony/060117digitaleurope06\\_ray.pdf](http://www.pff.org/issues-pubs/testimony/060117digitaleurope06_ray.pdf)

“That there is a political economy dimension to intellectual property rights should be apparent by the fact that we convene international conferences like this one to discuss them. That said, it is necessary to define what is meant by the political economy of intellectual property rights [IPRs]; to identify what effects, if any, the political economy dimensions of IPR have; and to look for means to mitigate those effects if necessary.”

#### WHY STOVEPIPE REGULATION NO LONGER WORKS: AN ESSAY ON THE NEED FOR A NEW MARKET-ORIENTED COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Randolph J. May. The Progress & Freedom Foundation. Federal Communications Law Journal. Vol. 58, No. 1. January 2006. 12 pages.

<http://www.law.indiana.edu/fclj/pubs/v58/no1/MayPDF.pdf>

“Congress is beginning to consider whether new communications legislation is needed to supplant the Telecommunications Act of 1996. In light of the profound technological and marketplace changes that have occurred in the last decade, especially those attributable to the accelerating proliferation of digital technologies and services, any new legislative reform effort should include an examination of the division between federal and state regulatory authority, the amalgam of subsidies known as the Universal Service system, and management of the spectrum.”